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## Introduction: English-medium instruction in European higher education: from the North to the South

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The *English in Europe* book series takes the research presented in these conferences as its starting point. In each case, however, papers have been rewritten, and many of the papers have been specially commissioned to provide a series of coherent and balanced collections, giving a thorough and authoritative picture of the challenges posed by teaching, studying and using English in Europe today.

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## English-medium instruction in European higher education: From the north to the south<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Introduction

European universities have for some time been undergoing dramatic transformative processes centred on internationalization, marketization, competition and standardization (Gürüz 2008; Borghans, Cörvers and National Bureau of Economic Research 2009; Hazelkorn 2011). In non-English dominant contexts, this tends to equate with “Englishization”, i.e. an increased use of English (Piller and Cho 2013; Saarinen and Nikula 2012; Phillipson 2009). Englishization affects all or most communicative activities associated with universities: research dissemination, preparation of funding bids, teaching and supervision, internal and external communication (Lillis and Curry 2010; Haberland, Lønsmann, and Preisler 2013; Grenall 2012; Llurda, Cots and Armengol 2014; Ljosland 2014). This volume focuses specifically on the issues, tensions and debates surrounding the use of English as a medium of instruction, or, as we shall also refer to it, EMI. In the context of higher education, scholars have explored EMI under different labels and with different objectives, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Wilkinson and Zeger 2007; Smit and Dafouz 2012; Dalton-Putter 2011) or English as a Lingua Franca in Academia (ELFA) (Mauranen 2014; Jenkins 2014; Seidlhofer 2011).

The purpose of this volume is to give an account of the status of English as a medium of instruction in various political, geographical and ideological contexts: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central Europe, regions which are at different stages of EMI implementation (Brenn-White and Faethe 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> This volume is one of several outcomes of the Leverhulme Trust-funded research network “English in Europe: Opportunity or Threat”, directed by Professor Andrew Linn, at the University of Sheffield, UK. The editors wish to thank all network participants as well as contributors to this volume. Jacob Thøgersen and Inger Mees are thanked for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

This is a project worth undertaking since preliminary evidence suggests that EMI has prompted different reactions in different contexts. In some corners of Europe, it has been met with fierce resistance, such as when a group of lecturers and researchers at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy, sued their university for implementing EMI on the grounds that it violated their “freedom in teaching” (Santulli this volume; Pulcini and Campagna this volume). Similar resistance has been reported in France, where EMI is viewed by some, not least the Académie française, as a threat to the national language and an authentic French identity (Gallix 2013). In other corners of Europe, EMI seems to have been implemented with less overt resistance, for instance in Croatia and Germany (Drljača Margić and Vodopija-Krstanović this volume; Gürtler and Kronewald this volume). While EMI seems to have been implemented in the Nordic countries without much resistance from staff and students, a great deal of concern has been expressed by the national language councils and members of the cultural elite (Jensen and Thøgersen 2011; Bolton and Kuteeva 2012; Hultgren, Gregersen and Thøgersen 2014). Other contexts are interesting because they face additional complexities of managing minority languages alongside English as well as a majority language, such as Catalan or Basque in Spain and Swedish in Finland (Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra 2014; Lindström and Sylvén 2014; Garrett and Balsà 2014). Finally, there are contexts about which very little is known, such as Turkey, Croatia and Estonia. In sum, attitudes to EMI appear far from homogenous.

Whilst researchers have for some time now been following the permutations of opinions about the presence of English in European higher education, this volume is intended to provide a focused overview of Europe. All countries included in this volume have at various points since 1999 ratified the Council of Europe’s Bologna Declaration. The Bologna Declaration proposed a European Higher Education Area in which students could move freely between countries, using prior qualifications in one country as acceptable entry requirements for further study in another. It was agreed to adopt similar and comparable degree structures consisting of two main cycles: undergraduate (lasting a minimum of three years) and graduate (consisting of MA and PhD levels). The aim has been to increase mobility within the European Higher Education Area and, ultimately, to increase competitiveness vis-à-vis other educational strongholds in the world such as the US and, increasingly, China. Whilst the aims of the Bologna Declaration are shared across the national contexts reported on in this volume, the effects are, as already hinted at, likely to vary according to their political, socio-cultural, economic and historical contexts. Hopefully, this will pave the way for an interesting and focused comparison of the implementation, ideolo-

gies, policies and practices of EMI in Europe (for volumes with a wider geographical remit, see, e.g., van der Walt 2013; Preisler, Klitgård, and Fabricius 2011; Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra 2012; Haberland, Lønsmann, and Preisler 2013).

## 2 English-medium instruction in Europe: A north-south divide

Although it is difficult to obtain comparable and up-to-date numbers on English-medium programmes at universities in non-English dominant countries in Europe, most sources appear to document an unequivocal rise in the provision of English-medium instruction. An increase of 38 per cent has been noted at master’s level in just one and a half years from the end of 2011 to June 2013 (Brenn-White and van Rest 2012; Brenn-White and Faethe 2013). Interpretive caution is warranted, however, since the offering of master’s programmes as a whole (i.e. including those taught in a national language) has also increased, albeit not to the same extent (Brenn-White and Faethe 2013). In 2008, Wächter and Maiworm found a doubling in the offering of MA programmes in English since 2003 (Wächter and Maiworm 2008). Table 1 shows the number of master’s programmes taught entirely or partly in English in each of the national contexts reported on in this volume, based on our own calculations. Unlike most available figures, the figures have been corrected for population size, and, as can be seen, there is a rather striking north-south divide with the Nordic and Baltic states having a higher proportion of English-medium master’s programmes per 100,000 inhabitants than Southern Europe. For instance, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Estonia offer between 9 and 3.7 MA programmes in English per 100,000 inhabitants. This may be symptomatic of smaller sized-populations, for whom it is more important and attractive to recruit staff and students from overseas.

Notwithstanding such apparent growth and national variation, numbers often obscure considerable variation across institutions and disciplines. Institutionally, the provision of EMI has been found to vary (Hultgren 2014), partly in accordance with the aims and identity of the institution as illustrated by the contrast between the internationally-oriented Roskilde University in Denmark and the nationally-oriented universities of the Faroe Islands and the Sami University College in Norway (Mortensen and Haberland 2012; Bull 2012). With respect to EMI subjects, the greatest proportion of master’s programmes is in business and economics (28 percent) and engineering and technology (21 per

**Table 1:** Master's programmes taught entirely or partly in English<sup>2</sup>

Country	MA programmes in English	Population	MA programmes in English per 100,000 inhabitants
Iceland	29	321,857	9
Sweden	764	9,644,864	7.9
Denmark	363	5,627,235	6.5
Finland	296	5,454,444	5.4
Norway	206	5,136,700	4.0
Estonia	49	1,311,870	3.7
Germany	763	80,585,700	0.9
Spain	378	46,704,314	0.8
Italy	335	59,943,933	0.6
Turkey <sup>3</sup>	164	76,667,864	0.2
Croatia	5	4,284,889	0.1

cent), followed by the social sciences (14 per cent), the natural sciences (9 per cent), and the humanities and arts (8 percent) (Brenn-White and Faethe 2013).<sup>4</sup> Such disciplinary differences, stemming from different “knowledge-making practices and educational goals” have prompted calls for tailoring language educational policies to specific disciplines (Kuteeva and Airey 2014: 533).

Moreover, the provision of EMI also varies according to educational level and teaching strategy. It is well-documented that EMI is significantly more widespread at master's level than at undergraduate level, reflecting, partly, a greater degree of commodification at masters' level with European institutions competing to attract non-EU fee-paying students for master's programmes in particular. In Denmark and Iceland, for instance, where comparable data on this is available, EMI-programmes at master's level constitute 26–36%, whereas the proportion at undergraduate level is 6–9% (Hultgren 2013; Kristinsson and Bernharðsson 2013). Obtaining accurate numbers of EMI programmes is also

hampered by the fact that although English may be listed as the official medium of instruction in course catalogues, ethnographic research has shown that the national and other languages are also often used as an important teaching and learning resource (Haberland, Lønsmann, and Preisler 2013; Söderlundh 2012; Ljosland 2010). Ljosland (2010), for example, reminds us of the many strategies and resources involved in teaching and learning, each of which may be associated with their own patterns of language choice, such as course literature, computer-aided presentations, note taking, lab work, examinations, assignments, dissertations, e-learning activities, computer software and group discussions (Ljosland 2010; Söderlundh 2012; Thøgersen, et al. 2013).

Thus, while estimates on EMI are useful in their own right, they often conceal a highly complex and linguistically diverse reality at internationalized universities (Haberland, Lønsmann, and Preisler 2013; Preisler, Klitgård, and Fabricius 2011; Cots, Llurda, and Garrett 2014). Partly this diversity is due to increased transnational mobility manifested in terms like “exchange students”, “visiting students” or “free movers”. Data from the Nordic countries indicates that the proportion of non-Nordic students at Nordic universities is around 5–15% (Godenhjelm, Saarinen, and Östman 2013; Hultgren 2013; Kristoffersen, Kristiansen, and Røyneland 2013; Kristinsson and Bernharðsson 2013; Salö and Josephson 2013). In addition to multilingualism as the result of international mobility, the domestic student body may itself be multilingual – an often overlooked observation (Holmen 2012). Linguistic diversity, however, often perpetuates the use of English, as English tends to be used as a lingua franca to enable communication between speakers of different first languages (Gnutzmann, Jakisch, and Rabe forthcoming; Mortensen 2014; Björkman 2013). Thus, the relationship between multilingualism and Englishization is of a mutually perpetuating dynamics, whereby increased multilingualism also leads to increased use of English (see de Swaan 2001 for a similar logic).

### 3 Drivers of English-medium instruction

Drivers of Englishization may be theorized as being located at different levels from the global to the classroom level. It is important to recognize, however, that there is a complex interrelationship between the different levels, e.g. national policies to internationalize will influence institutional policies to do the same. Table 2 attempts to provide an overview and illustrates each level with an example. At the global level, the General Agreement on Trade in Services has, since 1995, committed member states to consider higher education

<sup>2</sup> Authors' own calculations based on information from [mastersportal.eu](http://mastersportal.eu).

<sup>3</sup> As [mastersportal.eu](http://mastersportal.eu) does not make a distinction between Greek and Turkish-speaking parts of Cyprus, Turkey is used as a proxy for North Cyprus which is the focus of Arkin & Osam's chapter in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Brenn-White and Faethe's report does not give any information on which countries were included in this analysis, but the total number of programmes suggests that all master's programmes in Europe were included, except those in the UK and Ireland. Note also that these are absolute numbers and are not corrected for the fact that some disciplines may feature a higher overall number of MA programmes offered in both English and a national language.



**Table 2:** Drivers of EMI at different levels

Level	Example
Global	General Agreement on Trade in Services
European	Bologna Declaration
National	Internationalization strategies
Institutional	Targets to recruit international staff and students
Classroom	Presence of non-local language speakers

as a service to be traded rather than as a common good, and there is pressure to remove barriers to trading (Phillipson this volume). As a consequence, higher education is increasingly viewed as a commodity, which has paved the way for university ranking systems in which universities compete for students from a global pool of candidates (Tilak 2008; Gürüz 2008; Hazelkorn 2011). This inevitably provides an incentive to offer English-medium programmes. Similarly, as already mentioned, the European decision to create a common European higher education area (EHEA) was deliberately designed to promote intra-European mobility and make Europe a competitive player in the global knowledge economy (Phillipson 2009). At the national level, various policy decisions have contributed to EMI, often as a direct result of decisions made at a supra-national level. In Denmark, for instance, government policies have placed considerable emphasis on internationalization as this tends to be equated with excellence. Institutions have often operationalized this as increasing their intake of international staff, which also leads to Englishization (Hultgren 2014). Institutional policies may also decide to offer EMI as a way to equip their domestic students for a global job market, what some have referred to as “internationalization at home” (e.g., Söderlundh 2010). At classroom level, it is well known that English will often be chosen as a lingua franca if there is at least one person present who does not have the local national language as their first (Gnutzmann, Jakisch, and Rabe forthcoming; Mortensen 2014; Björkman 2013), which has been referred to as the “guest decides principle” (Gregersen 2012). In between these levels, there are intermediate levels at which decisions are made, for instance, faculties and departments may make other decisions than their institution (Kuteeva and Airey 2014) and groups of students may make other decisions than their teacher (Söderlundh 2012; Ljosland 2010).

It is worth noting that drivers of Englishization may or may not be explicitly recognized as such. At one end of the spectrum we find strategic decisions to offer courses and programmes in English to tap into the lucrative non-EU student market (Hultgren 2014), at the other we find those decisions where

no-one seems to have contemplated or predicted the vast linguistic implications. It has often been pointed out, for instance, that the Bologna Declaration did not devote a single word to language-related issues, despite the undeniably huge linguistic consequences engendered by promoting mobility within the European higher education area (Phillipson 2006; Ljosland 2005; Saarinen and Nikula 2012). Often, it is the case that drivers of Englishization come in the guise of objectives to excel and being world-class. For instance, the mission statement of the University of Copenhagen contains the following passage:

Having fostered eight Nobel laureates, being a member of the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) and ranked highly in the European university landscape, the University must proudly carry its traditions onward. This will continue to be the basis for everything we do. (University of Copenhagen 2012: 12)

The document then goes on to lists the following four aims:

- We aim to enhance our international research reputation by focusing on our existing top research areas as well as securing a good framework for emerging research.
- We aim to work [in a] focused [way] towards international recruitment of the best students and researchers.
- We aim to improve our PhD area, also in terms of international collaboration.
- We aim to increase the share of our research published in the best academic journals. (University of Copenhagen 2012: 14)

While Englishization is not explicitly mentioned in any of these four aims, it is easy to see how strategies to “enhance international research reputation”, “work in a focused way towards international recruitment”, “improve ... international collaboration” and “publish[ed] in the best academic journals” will indirectly foster Englishization, given the need for a shared language in which to undertake these activities. Thus, whether or not Englishization is a strategic priority, there is little doubt that policies based on free-market principles will indirectly engender it (see also Piller and Cho 2013).

## 4 Structure and outline of the volume

This volume brings together a variety of European perspectives on EMI in higher education. Through a range of methodologies (interviews, questionnaires, stimulated recall and analyses of language policies, university websites, and job advertisements), we hear the voices of teachers, students, administrators, as

interpreted through the authors. The volume is divided into three parts: Part 1: Opportunity or Threat, Part 2: Before, During and After EMI, and Part 3: Policy and Ideology.

The first part examines the role of English as an opportunity or a threat in European higher education. Chapter 1 opens the discussion with a strong statement from the threat perspective, while the remaining chapters (2–5) report on the attitudes of key stakeholders in the introduction of EMI in Europe, namely lecturers and/or administrators at higher education institutions, as examined through questionnaires. The studies were conducted in areas where the introduction of EMI is still in its infancy: Croatia, Italy, the Basque Country and finally Germany, where EMI has perhaps a slightly longer history.

In his politically committed opening contribution, Robert Phillipson (Chapter 1) interprets the increasing use of English as a medium of instruction at European universities as an instance of linguistic imperialism, displaying what he regards as an inextricable link between economically, politically and socio-culturally powerful nation states such as the US and the UK and the spread of English. Phillipson positions himself in opposition to English as a *Lingua Franca* scholars and, in particular, the British applied linguist Jim Coleman, one of the pioneers of the field of EMI, whom he sees as detaching Englishization from aspects of power and hegemony. Phillipson advocates language policies based on additive bilingualism on the grounds that English monolingualism leads to inequities as well as to loss of cultural knowledge and linguistic diversity.

In Chapter 2, Branka Margić and Irena Vodopija-Krstanović present the first study of the attitudes of university lecturers towards introducing EMI at a Croatian university – a context in which higher education is still almost exclusively conducted in the local language. They find that the majority of the respondents in their questionnaire survey think that EMI is not only possible but also desirable at their institution, even though only about half of them feel competent to actually teach EMI courses and point to various problems that they foresee in connection with the introduction of EMI.

Virginia Pulcini and Sandra Campagna (Chapter 3) examine the attitudes of 79 lecturers at the University of Turin in the light of the controversial decision, which was later repealed, by the management at the Politecnico di Milano to switch to English only for all courses at graduate level. They discuss the need to balance “local” concerns, such as one’s culture and identity, with “global” concerns of international competition, and warn that imposing EMI without adequate pedagogical justification will be problematic.

Katherine Gürtler and Elke Kronewald report in Chapter 4 on the situation in Germany, where the introduction of EMI is currently taking place at a very fast pace. In their large-scale survey of more than 1,000 lecturers from different

higher education institutions they find that those who have a background in foreign-language teaching have chosen to engage in EMI out of interest, while those who had taught only in the local language opposed the introduction of EMI. Among the problems identified in the study are the students’ proficiency in English and the lack of incentives for teachers.

In Chapter 5, David Lasagabaster analyses the opinions of the teaching and administrative staff of the bilingual (Basque and Spanish) University of the Basque Country with regard to the implementation of a new Multilingualism Programme. He finds that both teachers and administrators have mostly positive comments about the programme and express little concern that the programme is dominated by English language courses. He concludes that English is a “stumbling block” in the implementation of a multilingual language policy.

English-medium instruction in higher education is affected by the contexts of the countries in which it is implemented, including prior education and job needs, and opportunities after university graduation. For that reason, in Part 2 of this volume, “Before, During, and After EMI”, we include chapters focusing on how well students are prepared for participating in EMI programs (Chapter 6), how English-medium programs may directly affect teaching and learning (Chapters 7 and 8) as well as lecturers’ perception of this effect (Chapter 9), and the status of English use and needs in the current job market (Chapter 10).

In Chapter 6, Hafþís Ingvasdóttir and Birna Arbjörnsdóttir argue that the growing use of English in Iceland has a strong influence on higher education. The authors claim that compulsory education does not adequately prepare students for the standard needed in English-medium programmes at post-compulsory level, which require high-level reading and writing skills rather than receptive language skills. Therefore, the authors recommend that the national curricula and university language policies are adapted in order to reflect the new linguistic realities.

John Airey (Chapter 7) provides an overview of his research on EMI in Sweden, which can be broadly categorized into three EMI areas: teaching, learning, and attitudes across disciplines. In particular, Airey discusses the challenges faced by lecturers and students in EMI, and provides recommendations on how to overcome these. He concludes that a universal solution for EMI difficulties across disciplines is not realistic because the literacy needs of students vary greatly.

Chapter 8, by Erkan Arkin and Necdet Osam, also revolves around the impact of EMI on disciplinary teaching and learning, in their case at a university in North Cyprus. Using videotaped material from lectures in English and Turkish and semi-structured student interviews, Arkin and Osam analyse the lecturer’s discourse characteristics and students’ comprehensibility levels. They conclude

that despite the lecturer's endeavours to accommodate student learning during English-medium lessons, students still experienced learning difficulties.

Rather than dealing with the language and content characteristics of the EMI classroom, Chapter 9 by Joyce Kling focuses on lecturers' perspectives, i.e. their perceptions of the effects of EMI on their personal sense of being teachers. Based on data analysed through a multi-method approach, Kling finds that experienced lecturers are able to maintain their confidence and security despite the usual instructional and linguistic challenges of the EMI setting. Kling finds that the main factors for maintaining their teaching confidence are their teaching experience and pedagogic content knowledge.

In Chapter 10 Glenn Ole Hellekjær and Anne-Inger Hellekjær argue that the development of EMI and English language support programs should be informed by the needs of the job market. Based on a large-scale study investigating the needs and the uses of English of staff in government ministerial jobs and ministerial job advertisements, Hellekjær and Hellekjær conclude that university programs fail to adequately prepare students for their job experiences after graduation.

The final part of the volume, Part 3, "Policy and Ideology", combines perspectives on language policy and ideology in an Estonian, Italian and Finnish higher education context. While the Estonian report (Chapter 11) is structured around analyses of explicit language policies in the form of semi-legal documents, the Finnish contribution (Chapter 12) focuses on what might be referred to as implicit policies, or ideologies, about English as they emerge from the bottom up among university staff and students. The Italian report (Chapter 13) combines a top-down with a bottom-up perspective by first providing an account of legal proceedings and then examining how an Italian university manages the bilingual English-Italian reality on their website.

In Chapter 11, Josep Soler-Carbonell uncovers some tensions in Estonian higher education language policies, notably in relation to how English and Estonian are portrayed. While Estonian is explicitly framed as being in need of preservation in the domain of higher education, the policies interestingly avoid mentioning English explicitly, opting instead for the vaguer label "foreign languages". Soler-Carbonell suggests that by not naming any "foreign language" in particular, the door is left open for several of them (English, Russian and other languages used in Estonia), a tactic of flexibility which has been referred to as "strategic ambiguity" (Angouri 2013). Soler-Carbonell also suggests that not mentioning English or Russian explicitly could be interpreted as a way of invisibilizing those languages that exert a high pressure on Estonian's maintenance and sustainability, a process akin to "erasure" (Irvine and Gal 2000).

Francesca Santulli, in Chapter 12, reports on an intriguing case in which the decision to adopt English as a medium of instruction on all MA and PhD programmes from 2014 at the Italian university Politecnico di Milano triggered a heated debate and a lawsuit. Santulli then focuses on the university's website with a view to examining how the policy of the institution is practically implemented. Santulli identifies discrepancies in the Italian and English versions of the websites and puts these down not solely to the web designer's lack of English proficiency, but to different linguistic conventions in English and Italian. This prompts Santulli to make a link between language and knowledge (also invoked by Phillipson in his contribution), and between academic English and epistemicide.

Finally, in Chapter 13, Laura McCambridge and Taina Saarinen explore the extent to which ideologies about native-speaker varieties of English may be changing as a result of globalization and, more specifically, by the multilingual reality in Finnish higher education. The authors identify the existence of two contrasting ideologies among Finnish university staff and students: the "not" and the "but" in native/non-native ideologies. The "non-nativeness as 'not' ideology" reproduces the native ideal and considers non-native varieties as deficient in comparison. The "non-nativeness as 'but' ideology", in contrast, challenges the native ideal. The authors conclude by discussing the potential implications of this development for language policies in Finnish higher education.

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